

IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (Currently amended) An isolated antibody comprising at least one complementarity determining region (CDR) of the V_H [and/]or V_L region of a human antibody comprising the amino acid sequence encoded by the DNA sequence depicted in Figure 5 (V_L) ^{cancel} (of SEQ ID NO: 42) [and/]or Figure 6 (V_H) (SEQ ID NO: 3) as a CDR1, CDR2 or CDR 3 sequence that specifically recognizes a conformation-dependent epitope of Hepatitis C Virus (HCV) glycoprotein E2 and is capable of precipitating precipitates covalently or non-covalently associated E2/E1 complexes.

2. (Currently amended) The antibody of claim 1, wherein said isolated antibody is a monoclonal antibody, one of a polyclonal antiserum, antibody-chimeric antibody, humanized antibody, synthetic antibody, antibody fragment, or a chemically modified derivative thereof.

3. (Currently amended) The antibody of claim 1 or 2 further comprising the amino acid sequence of the V_H and/or V_L region as depicted in SEQ ID NO: 2, 4 and/or

6.

4. ~~X~~ (Currently amended) An antibody recognizing the same epitope or antigen as the antibody of ~~any one of claims 1 to 3~~ claim 1 or 2.

5. (Cancelled)

6. (Cancelled)

7. (Cancelled)

8. (Cancelled)

9. (Cancelled)

10. (Cancelled)

11. (Cancelled)

12. (Cancelled)

13. (Cancelled)
14. (Cancelled)
15. (Cancelled)
16. (Cancelled)
17. (Currently amended) A neutralization assay for inhibiting the binding of Hepatitis C Virus (HCV) glycoprotein E2 onto target cells using the antibody of ~~any one of claims 1 to 4~~ claim 1 or 2 comprising contacting said virus with said antibody and determining whether binding of HCV to target cells is inhibited.

18. (Cancelled)
19. (Cancelled)
20. (Cancelled)
21. (Cancelled)

22. (New) An antibody recognizing the same epitope or antigen as the antibody of claim 3.

23. (New) A neutralization assay for inhibiting the binding of Hepatitis C Virus (HCV) glycoprotein E2 to target cells using the antibody of claim 3 comprising contacting said virus with said antibody and determining whether binding of HCV to target cells is inhibited.

24. (New) A neutralization assay for inhibiting the binding of Hepatitis C Virus (HCV) glycoprotein E2 to target cells using the antibody of claim 4 comprising contacting said virus with said antibody and determining whether binding of HCV to target cells is inhibited.